

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT HENRY L. TREWHITT BY-LINER BALTIMORE SUN, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 HEADED "BOMB DEATH LIKELY TO HURT CHILE TIES."

2. WASHINGTON -- SPECIALISTS IN LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS FORESAW IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR UNITED STATES-LATIN RELATIONS YESTERDAY IN THE ASSASSINATION OF ORLANDO LETELIER, THE CHILEAN EXILE LEADER.

2. FOR ONE THING, THE PRAGMATISTS WHO URGE THE U.S. TO PRESS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH CHILE DESPITE CURRENT REPRESSION THERE, HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP SHORT. ONE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT, FRUSTRATED AND BITTER OVER MR. LETELIER'S DEATH MONDAY, OBSERVED THAT, "THIS IS GOING TO TAKE A LOT OF SORTING OUT OVER A LONG PERIOD."

3. FOR THE MOMENT OFFICIAL WASHINGTON, AMERICANS AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATS ALIKE, STILL WERE CATCHING THEIR UNCLASSIFIED

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BREATH AFTER SAYING THE CORRECT AND PREDICTABLE THINGS.

MR. LETELIER, WHO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES HERE, AND AN AMERICAN ASSISTANT WERE

KILLED WHEN A BLAST DESTROYED MR. LETELIER'S CAR ON EMBASSY ROW.

4. THE FBI REPORTED THAT A RADIO CONTROLLED OR TIMED DEVICE APPARENTLY HAD BEEN ATTACHED TO THE CAR. ITS SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS STUDYING EVIDENCE AND WAS WITHOUT SUSPECTS SO FAR.

5. THE STATE DEPARTMENT EXPRESSED "GRAVE CONCERN." PRESIDENT FORD AND JIMMY CARTER, HIS DEMOCRATIC OPPONENT, DEPLORED THE MURDERS. MANUEL TRUCCO, THE PRESENT CHILEAN AMBASSADOR, SAID HIS GOVERNMENT "REPUDIATES THIS OUTRAGEOUS ACT OF TERRORISM."

6. BUT PUBLIC CRITICS OF GEN. AUGUSTO PINOCHET UGARTE. DICTATORSHIP, AND MANY U.S. OFFICIALS PRIVATELY, AGREED THAT THE ASSASSINATION WAS THE WORK OF DINA, CHILE'S SECRET POLICE.

7. IN THE AMERICAN ASSESSMENT, MR. LETELIER HAD BECOME A DEFINITE EXILE THREAT TO THE REGIME. ONLY A WEEK AGO, PRESIDENT PINOCHET PUBLICLY CANCELED MR. LETELIER'S CITIZENSHIP.

8. MR. LETELIER WAS THE AMBASSADOR OF THE LATE SALVADOR ALLENDE'S GOVERNMENT TO WASHINGTON FROM 1971 TO 1973. HE RETURNED TO CHILE IN 1973 TO SERVE AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER.

9. FIRST AS AN OFFICIAL OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THEN AS AMBASSADOR, HE HAD MADE MANY FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON. HIS FLAMING RED HAIR MADE HIM PHYSICALLY DISTINCTIVE. HIS SOCIALIST INTELLECTUALISM EARNED HIM THE LABEL OF IDEALIST, BUT HE WAS WIDELY RESPECTED.

10. AT THAT TIME, THE U.S. WAS ENCOURAGING THE OPPOSITION TO MR. ALLENDE. AFTER GENERAL PINOCHET'S COUP, HOWEVER, RELATIONS REMAINED PUBLICLY STRAINED BECAUSE OF THE REGIME'S REPRESSION OF REAL AND FANCIED OPPONENTS. ONLY RECENTLY, THE U.S. HAS ATTEMPTED TO IMPROVE TIES BY ENCOURAGING RELEASE OF PRISONERS.

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11. THE ASSASSINATION, WHICH FOLLOWS ATTACKS ON OTHER EXILES, IS WIDELY EXPECTED TO FREEZE THAT PROCESS. AS

ONE U.S. SPECIALIST PUT IT YESTERDAY: "ALL OF LATIN
AMERICA IS WATCHING US. DICTATORS AND DEMOCRATS ARE
WAITING TO SEE HOW WE HANDLE THE INVESTIGATION, AND
THEY WILL ACT ACCORDINGLY. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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